

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 092 787

CE 001 535

AUTHOR Brendel, LeRoy A.
TITLE Reaching for Editorial or In-Depth Proofreading.
PUB DATE 1 Dec 73
NOTE 26p.

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.75 HC-\$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Business Education; Business English; Business Skills; Business Subjects; Clerical Occupations; *Editing; *Language Skills; Office Occupations Education; Secondary Grades; Secretaries; *Stenography; *Teaching Methods; Vocational Education

IDENTIFIERS *Proofreading

ABSTRACT

Editorial, like clerical, proofreading cannot be left to chance; the know-how, what and why must be reviewed, recalled, reinforced, and refined daily. There are four avenues of daily activities available to the teacher to establish these skills: (1) homework reading assignment, (2) dictation-for-control material, (3) dictation for in-depth-proofing, and (4) daily dictation of copy containing error. It must become second nature to the student to "hawk-eye" every dictation for editorial errors. The basic foundation for this skill must begin in teaching clerical proofreading in the beginning typewriting and shorthand classes and systematic followup by the transcription teacher with a carefully planned and persistently applied simulated program. (HW)

ED 092787

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

REACHING FOR EDITORIAL OR IN-DEPTH PROOFREADING

LeRoy A. Brendel
Coordinator, Business Education
Pace University, New York City

A TERMINAL PERFORMANCE GOAL: "Given two takes of office-style dictation of 125-150 words each, the student will be able to detect and to correct four of five editorial content errors"--certainly a necessary and worthwhile terminal performance goal in a competency-based transcription class.

But to attain such a goal the teacher must (1) indoctrinate in the student the attitude that any dictation and its resulting transcript are guilty (of errors) until proven innocent thereof, and (2) direct special teaching efforts and materials toward the know-how, -what, and -why of such a goal.

But, first, some brief explanations of terms as used in the context of this paper.

OFFICE-STYLE DICTATION. Office-style dictation is generally thought of as that in which the dictator:

CE001535-

- a. dictates at an uneven rate, but slowly enough for the stenographer/secretary to encounter little speed difficulty except for brief spurts.
- b. makes changes, deletions, and additions as he dictates.
- c. includes comments and instructions not to be included in the transcript.

However, there is a fourth, often overlooked, characteristic: the editorial content errors made unknowingly by the dictator as he dictates.

This rather general definition of office-style dictation suggests at least two implications for teaching proofreading.

First, it implies that perhaps the transcription teacher should do a little soul-searching and decision-making whether to dictate material for transcription at a prescribed words-a-minute rate or to dictate material for transcription at a rate that enables students to produce mailable/usable transcripts the first time.

Realistically, timed dictation for transcription puts the students in a situation of being tested both on speed of dictation and quality of transcript, yet

the two are made up of different skills and knowledges.

Perhaps, instead of following the general practice of dictating material for transcription at an arbitrarily established cruising rate of 20 wpm below the speed norm of the class, the transcription teacher might dictate at an uneven rate, more nearly representing office-style, slowly enough for the students to encounter little speed difficulty except for short spurts.

Secondly, perhaps the transcription teacher should consider de-emphasizing the evaluation of a student's transcript on a grading scale ranging from 0-100% or from F to A and putting more emphasis on mailable/usable transcripts, the dictation for which is given at a more office-like rate.

Untimed dictation for transcription does not necessarily mean that office-style dictation per se should be adopted--although no known formal research has ever been done showing that this might not be a good technique--but it does mean that to get more nearly accurate transcripts, perhaps dictation of untimed, error-free material should be stressed much more than appears to be the current status quo.

Untimed dictation for transcription would permit both the teacher and the student to treat copy difficulty--vocabulary, phraseology, sentence structure, number expressions, and other problems--much more realistically.

Office dictators:

1. dictate number expressions that are statistical in nature more cautiously to ensure accuracy
2. use more distinct pauses for a series of words, phrases, or clauses
3. dictate sentences of unusual structure more slowly, often including the punctuation so as to express clearly the intended message.

Timed, paced wam dictation for transcription does not provide much leeway for handling such problems realistically, thus creating transcription hurdles for the student.

Suggesting, however, untimed dictation for transcription is not intended to imply or infer that dictation for speed should be totally disregarded. Generally speaking, every transcription class period should have

some dictation for speed building, striving for the highest rate possible for each student. Too, there is no reason why timed dictation tests should not on occasion be administered, the results of which, however, should be considered only as a minor, not a major, factor in a student's final grade, if at all.

EDITORIAL CONTENT ERRORS. During the time the student is being educated towards the objective of being able to transcribe timed dictation that is English-perfect and meaningful in content, the teacher conditions him to preproof and postproof to find errors in typing, spelling, punctuation, technical arrangement and content of copy (margins; dates; inside address; salutation; closing; complete, meaningful sentences), and other related areas.

However, very few, if any, dictators in the world of business dictate perfect or near-perfect copy. While trying to develop thought trends, a dictator will often repeat himself; will misstate data (or ask the secretary to confirm and/or to furnish them before transcribing); will express a meaning that is unclear, and through lack of clarity convey a thought contrary to

that intended; or will use incorrect English.

Consequently, for job competency, the student in the final stages of transcription must be able to cope with material that is not copy-perfect.

The student must be observant of dictated copy; he must think about the dictated words and their effect on the reader. For example, in the following sentences, the transcriber must make clear what the dictator intended:

In normal times the company uses a (hundred odd or hundred-odd) handicapped men and women.

Have available for prizes (twenty-five or twenty five-) dollar bills and (twenty-one or twenty one-) dollar bills.

With everyone speaking and hearing sentence fragments daily rather than complete sentences, it is natural to hear as "correct" oral statements with, for example, like used for as or as if, as in "The campaign was carried out just like it had been planned." Therefore, the student must be trained to listen for and to correct English errors made during dictation, and, further, to preproof for any errors that might not have been heard during the dictation.

The student must also be taught to listen attentively to the dictator's pauses and voice inflections, to be perceptive to--and, consequently, to reproduce clearly--the intent of the dictator. This is especially true in such dictation material as the following:

Before answering the chairman listed the pros and cons.
Before answering, the chairman listed the pros and cons.

Long before they had decided their course of action.
Long before, they had decided their course of action.

Attempts to arbitrate the disputed issues ended happily.
Attempts to arbitrate the disputed issues ended, happily.

Since he has made every effort to increase production.
Since, he has made every effort to increase production.

The stenographer must be helped to become fully aware of the fact that the dictator is apt to err in English, in factual information, in meaningful expressions--that he will make statements that will have to be researched, to be verified, and/or to be double-checked for accuracy.

PREPROOFING. The preproofing stage precedes the actual typing of the transcript, and it is during this

stage that any errors in the dictation notes should be detected and corrected to avoid making erasures or re-typing of the copy. Erasing and retyping are very expensive; for example, the cost of producing one letter ranges from approximately \$2 for general office dictation to more than \$3 at a higher executive level. These costs include such things as dictator's time, stenographic time, nonproductive labor, fixed charges, materials, mailing, and filing.

In the preproofing stage the stenographer reads the shorthand notes and follows these procedures:

1. Inserts and circles all necessary punctuation and paragraph marks.
2. Writes in corrections for errors in grammar or language structure that might have crept into the dictation.
 - a. Fragmentary sentences
 - b. Dangling participles
 - c. Capitalization
 - d. Agreement of pronoun and antecedent
 - e. Redundancy
 - f. Parallel sentence structure
 - g. Double negatives
 - h. Comparison of adjectives and adverbs
 - i. Agreement of subject and verb
 - j. Correct use of who, whom; lie, lay; sit, set; the infinitive to be; and other troublesome usages

3. Checks all spelling and correct word usage (especially individual "demons"), actually writing the correction above the notes or in adjoining column. . .
4. Verifies accuracy of all figures, dates, appointments, addresses, amount, and number expressions (words or figures), through previous correspondence, files, calendar, appointment books, bookkeeping records, and so forth.
5. Fits into their proper places any last-minute changes in wording or instructions made by the dictator.
6. Inserts salutation (which should not be dictated) that agrees with inside address.
7. Inserts titles of respect (which should not be dictated).
8. Checks agreement of spelling of addressee's name in body with inside address and envelope.
9. Inserts closing (which should not be dictated) that agrees with tone of letter.
10. Checks, especially, first and last sentences where errors are most frequently overlooked.

POSTPROOFING. This is the stage that immediately follows the typing of the complimentary closing (so that in case of poor vertical placement, the final lines can be spaced apart or close together to perfect the letter placement).

The **POSTPROOFING STAGE** follows the typing of the copy, before copy is removed from typewriter--usually at last line of closing.

This stage possibly requires more concentration in making final check for meaning and mechanics since presumably all errors have been eliminated in preproofing stage.

1. Omission of words, phrases, or sentences
2. Typographical errors
3. Substitutions (meaningful)
4. Transposed words
5. Arrangement

LETTER

- (a) placement on letterhead
- (b) length of paragraphs
- (c) arrangement of letter parts

ENVELOPE

- (a) agreement with inside address and original correspondence
- (b) placement

- (c) arrangement: blocked
- (d) spacing: single
- (e) city, state, ZIP

6. Thought conveyance

7. Figures, dates, amounts, etc.

EDITORIAL OR IN-DEPTH PROOFING. Actually, the teaching of basic concepts of editorial or in-depth proofing should be started early in the typewriting course and early in the transcription course with teacher emphasis on teaching the student how to detect and correct clerical errors, those errors expected to be detected and corrected by a clerk-typist.

Clerical Errors. These types of errors deal primarily with the mechanics of writing a message. Such errors center around:

1. Typing
2. Spelling of individual words; plurals; abbreviations; homonyms; pseudohomonyms; one- and two-word expressions; compound words; capitalization.
3. The use of the hyphen for compound words, clarity, word division.
4. The use of the apostrophe to express simple

plurality or possession.

5. The use of quotation marks, underscore, other display devices and techniques.
6. The need for and the correct use of punctuation marks.
7. When to express numbers as words or figures.
8. The difference between a complete sentence and a phrase.

If a student is to grasp the full concept of in-depth proofreading, however, he must be given copy that also contains editorial content errors to be corrected before transcription.

Editorial Content Errors. Editorial content errors are those that do not clearly and correctly transmit the intent of the message. Such errors center around:

1. Agreement of subject and verb
2. Pronouns
 - a. Personal
 - b. Agreement with antecedent
3. Modifiers
 - a. Misused and misplaced
 - b. Sense adjectives and adverbs

- c. Double negatives
 - d. Comparison of adjectives and adverbs
 - e. -ly adjectives
 - f. Parallel structure
4. Figures, dates, appointments, and number expressions.

PLACE IN CURRICULUM

For high school students, education in editorial proofing, at least on an acquaintanceship level, can be done concurrently with the introduction of office-style dictation during the later part of transcription class. The allotted time and depth will naturally vary with the level of student abilities. For post-secondary students, however, a goal of proficiency in all aspects of proofreading should be set for the final semester of the shorthand program.

A CYCLIC SIMULATED PROGRAM

A simulated training program, proceeding from the very simple to the more complex, can fall roughly into four cycles.

Cycle 1. This first cycle has two functions:

- (1) to review English fundamentals and sentence structure,

and (2) to introduce editorial content errors the student should become aware of in preproofing.

During the first cycle, involvement should include:

1. Discussion with the class on a particular area of editorial content problems (e.g., subject-verb agreement), using a class-adopted office reference manual as final authority.
2. Dictation of 10 sentences, office-style, some containing errors, and some no errors. (Dictating is preferred to printed English exercises. The hoped-for transfer of learning from printed English exercises to shorthand seems not to be too evident. The added dimension of shorthand outlines apparently makes a difference in the accuracy between working with shorthand and working with printed English.)
3. Directing the students to preproof their notes, making corrections and indicating punctuation.
4. Having individual students read the corrected sentences aloud with punctuation. (The teacher makes note of any particular type of construction in which the class gives indication of

weakness for follow-up.)

5. Repeating Steps 2, 3, and 4 for two or three days, emphasizing those kinds of subject-verb constructions presenting difficulty as shown in Step 4.

A similar procedure can be followed for presenting other possible editorial errors, such as agreement of pronoun-antecedent, modifiers, and so forth. Following intensive dictation in a new area (e.g., pronoun-antecedent agreement), the teacher then dictates material that includes preceding areas covered (subject-verb agreement, for example), thus providing cumulative review, recall, reinforcement, and refinement of previous teachings-learnings.

Cycle 2. This cycle involves the teacher in dictating a letter containing an editorial error. Upon completion of the dictation, the teacher tells the students that there is one error that must be corrected during preproofing, carefully eliciting the correction from the class orally before they begin to transcribe. This technique should be repeated two or three times.

Cycle 3. In this cycle the teacher dictates one

or two letters, each containing one or two editorial errors. Upon completion of dictation, the teacher tells the class that there are errors in the material and that they should be aware of them during preproofing; but he does not assist in drawing out the corrections except possibly on an individual basis.

Cycle 4. This cycle is the proficiency level to be used extensively and intensively on the post-secondary level. During Cycle 4, with emphasis upon productivity of mailable/usable transcripts from office-style dictation, the teacher will want to be sure that at least one or two of several takes contain one or two editorial errors. Teachers are cautioned, however, not to overload any take with errors. Correcting numerous errors takes on the aspect of a game. The obvious errors are easy to detect; it's the occasional, rather indiscernible, errors that creep into dictation that the student has to learn to find and correct.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Following Cycle 1, for which the teacher can use any English grammar text for sentences, the materials needed for Cycles 2, 3, and 4 can be developed by the

teacher from the abundance of dictation materials already on the market: manuscripts, reports, bulletins, and memorandums, as well as letters (skill development dictation teachers are too "letter-happy").

For example, note how the two sentences that follow have been changed to create an editorial proofreading situation. The first sentence shows the sentence as given in the dictation take; directly below (elliptical), the sentence as dictated to achieve the editorial proofreading situation.

Between you and me, he acted as if he was pleased.
Dictate: Between...I, he acted like....

Subject-Verb Agreement. This should be one area of great concern in teaching editorial proofreading, especially sentences in which expressions separate the subject from the verb, the subject is an indefinite pronoun, or the spelling of the subject is the same for both the singular and plural form.

1. The chief accountant, as well as his assistants, submits weekly reports.
Dictate: The...submit....
2. Many a man has been recognized for his outstanding work.
Dictate: Many...have... OR, Many...have...their....

3. A series of talks has been held among the three groups.

Dictate: A series...have... OR, A...has...between....

Pronouns. Because students are frequently influenced aurally by radio, television, and prominent speakers (including those who read from prepared speeches), who use incorrect pronoun references, teachers must work extra hard to be certain that all aspiring executive secretaries and typists have a thorough knowledge of and competence in using pronouns.

Personal Pronouns

1. It is they, not we, who should have taken precautionary steps.

Dictate: It... them, not us....

2. We are uncertain whom he temporarily appointed to fill the vacancy.

Dictate: We...who....

3. Between you and me, someone willing to uproot himself has to be chosen.

Dictate: Between...myself...themselves....

Modifiers. To achieve smooth reading and rapid conveyance of one's message, precise wording and correct sentence structure are necessary. Misused and misplaced modifiers, unparallel sentence structure, and double negatives are examples of types of errors that make it difficult to read and grasp a writer's message.

Teaching to detect and correct such errors should be a must on any teacher's priority list.

Misused and Misplaced Modifiers

1. The company sold nearly all its entire stock during its mid-July sale.
Dictate: The...nearly sold....
2. Time was so pressing that while flying to Boston he had to write his speech on an envelope.
Dictate: Time...he had to write his speech while flying to Boston on an envelope.
3. The climate will probably not be so unpleasant as it is here.
Dictate: The...as unpleasant....

Adjectives and Adverbs

1. He appeared confident in his role as mediator.
Dictate: He...confidently....
2. It appears Mr. Bond performed quite well in similar situations.
Dictate: It...good....
3. Everyone remarked at the time how bitter the beverage tasted.
Dictate: Everyone...bitterly....

Double Negatives

1. Such action is to be taken only with my written permission.
Dictate: Such...is not....
2. It won't take a minute of your time to fill in the two blanks.
Dictate: It won't take but....

3. One can, as the situation now exists, do nothing more.

Dictate: One can't....

Comparison of Adjectives and Adverbs

1. This department now has larger expenditures with less income than any other department.
Dictate: This...any department.
2. Management, labor, and government cooperated with one another.
Dictate: Management...each other.
3. These solutions are more nearly correct than those submitted last week.
Dictate: These...more correct....

Parallel Structure

1. Miss Dobbs was very efficient in clerical routine duties, but exceptionally poor in stenography.
Dictate: Miss...but an exceptionally poor stenographer.
2. We need someone who can type, who can file, and who can greet callers.
Dictate: We...and to greet callers.
3. Each morning check your calendar appointments, sort the mail, and organize your desk for the day.
Dictate: Each...and you should organize....

Accuracy of Figures, Dates, Appointments. An incorrect date, amount, or overlapping of appointments can be not only embarrassing and confusing, but also expensive in time and money. Attention must, therefore,

be focused on these areas at every opportunity.

1. Mr. Flagg will be attending a Board meeting at 9:30, scheduled for 1 hour 15 minutes, so I set your appointment immediately after, 10:45 to 11:15.
Dictate: Mr. Flagg...11:45 to 12:15.
2. A nonstop flight from New York to San Francisco is approximately 4½ hours; therefore, if Mr. Angus leaves New York at midnight, he should be at the San Francisco airport at approximately 1:30 a.m.
Dictate: A...4:30 p.m.
3. We shall be very glad to see you on Thursday, June 30, at 9:15 a.m.
Dictate: We...June 31...in the morning.

APPLYING THE 4 Rs PRINCIPLE DAILY. If the in-depth proofreading skill is to be developed to the point of being a natural, automatized part of a stenographer's skills and knowledges, teaching for it has to be consistently and persistently planned by the teacher, preferably as a daily routine.

There are at least four avenues of daily activities available to the teacher for the systematic review, recall, reinforcement, and refinement of the in-depth proofreading skill.

Avenue 1: Homework Reading Assignment. When reading homework material in class, the teacher may call

attention to particular sentences that illustrate the need for in-depth proofreading. For example, assume the homework reading material contains these two sentences:

1. The costly-looking jewelry was imitation, not real.

Teacher: If you had this sentence dictated to you, what would you check during preproofing?

Student: Hyphenate costly-looking; comma after imitation.

2. We heartily disapprove of your taking on these extra duties.

Teacher: In this sentence, where would you focus attention in preproofing?

Student: Your before a noun ending in ing.

Avenue 2: Dictation-for-Control Material. Assume material dictated for control (following dictation for speed development) contains these two sentences:

1. This new model probably will not be so expensive as others now on the market.

Teacher: In this sentence, indicate what you would check while preproofing.

Student: Using so...as for negative comparison.

2. Either the credit department or the accounting department has made a serious error.

Teacher: What would you check in preproofing

this sentence?

Student: Has for the singular subject following or that connects two singular antecedents.

Avenue 3: Dictation for In-Depth Proofing. In this avenue, the teacher dictates several sentences involving all types of errors to be preproofed, typed, and corrected.

1. The reasons are obvious, as I have stated on numerous occasions.
Dictate: The..., like....
2. Recently I read in the paper that the Governor vetoed the bill.
Dictate: Recently...read where....
3. Fewer people applied than we had anticipated.
Dictate: Less...then....
4. Organizational plans will not take so long as for previous campaigns.
Dictate: Organizational...as long as....
5. Working alone all night, he successfully worked out a detailed plan.
Dictate: Working..., a detailed plan was successfully worked out.
6. Personnel has outlined only a few of the important duties.
Dictate: Personal has only....
7. It had been unanimously decided that the nominee is to be he.
Dictate: It...him.
8. We deeply appreciate your offering such liberal

terms.

Dictate: We...you....

9. Of the two models now available, Model E is the better.

Dictate: Of...best.

10. After our discussion yesterday, it occurred to me that I might be helpful.

Dictate: After...occurs....

11. We must be extremely careful to exercise discretion in handling this matter.

Dictate: We...digression....

Avenue 4: Daily Dictation of Copy Containing

Error(s). Naturally during the final stages of the transcription course, the student should be expected to write two or three takes to be transcribed during a given period of time. Included in at least one or two of these takes should be editorial errors that the student is expected to detect and correct for credit as a mailable/usable transcript.

A fifth avenue, to be used occasionally--even with nonshorthand students--is to have the students copy from rough drafts that contain editorial errors. Stenographers (and clerk-typists, possibly with a lesser degree in error difficulty) should be taught that preproofing and postproofing rough drafts should follow the same

routines as those followed for shorthand dictation.

Preparing such materials is not time-consuming or laborious. The teacher merely has to adapt some textbook material by inserting a few editorial errors (possibly a few clerical) in the copy, duplicate the material, and pass it out to be typed correctly.

SUMMARY

While the student should be made aware that in the world of work he will not be faced daily with dictation deliberately "loaded" with editorial or in-depth errors, it should be made quite clear that he will, nevertheless, be faced with errors that will occur, more frequently at some times than at other times, depending, perhaps, upon the pressures on the dictator at the time of dictation. Daily association with the dictator, it should also be pointed out, will doubtless reveal certain patterns of errors of which to be especially aware.

However, because errors outside the dictator's usual patterns will occur on occasion, to hawk-eye every dictation as if editorial errors were an every-take occurrence must become "second nature" to the student.

The basic foundation for this "second nature" must have its beginning in the teaching for the detection and correction of clerical errors in the beginning typewriting and shorthand classes; the firming up and the building upon this foundation in the detection and correction of editorial errors rest with the transcription teacher who must have a carefully planned simulated program and the determination to adhere to it consistently and persistently.

Editorial, like clerical, proofreading cannot be left to chance; the know-how, -what, and -why must be reviewed, recalled, reinforced, and refined daily.